

Pappas Telecasting Companies' 'donation' of \$325,000 in airtime to Republican candidates in certain areas is yet another example of a powerful media group abusing its privileged access to the public airwaves.

Localism is not served when a corporate headquarters decides to provide one side in local elections a louder voice than others. During election season, local audiences should be offered genuine debate -- not disingenuous offers to "purchase" an equal amount of response time.

Withholding, in effect censoring, one side of of a public issue sets a bad precedent. Well meaning people believed the world was flat. It was obvious! They were powerful and controlled the "media" of the day.

Pappas uses the public airwaves free of charge and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. Pappas' actions are legally questionable and cast doubt on whether Pappas truly intends to serve the public interest. Their actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. Further, they show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than just a returned postcard.

Legalities aside, one of our greatest strengths has been a free aggressive and objective media. If this media turns into a one-sided propaganda machine it will beget tyranny. Its only purpose will then be to promote ideology and manipulate truth. That's a slippery slope, and we are dangerously close to sliding down.

Thank you.